

New Kinds of Co-operations and Actors' Inclusion in Rural Regions

– Examples of Austria

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Federal Institute of Agricultural Economics

- Research Institute of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Sustainability and Tourism (Agriculture, Forestry, Environment, Water Management, Mining, Tourism)
- Scope of activities:
 - Research and empirical analysis in the field of agricultural economics, agricultural policy, regional research, rural sociology
 - Devising of business management consultancy materials
 - Development and provision of methodology and data processing software for agricultural research
 - Provision of a special agricultural economics library and documentation centre
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Content

- Characteristics/Problems of Rural Regions
- Traditional Types of Cooperation
- New Types of Cooperation
- Austrian Examples
- Conclusions

Characteristics / Problems of Rural Regions

- Low population density (consumers, employees...)
- Remoteness (distance to attractive centres, markets)
- Not attractive for public investments (social, technical infrastructure) or private investments
- Often combined with other specific regional disadvantages like mountain regions, small scaled structures, migration, commuting, low qualification, ageing population, closed borders.



Downwards spiral

Traditional Types of Cooperation

to change the spiral upwards:

- External money, investments, initial projects... (top down)
- Endogenous developments, co-operations to overcome disadvantages of small scales, single “fighters” (bottom up)
- Informal (mutual help, solidarity in specific times of crisis or periodical needs)
- Formal: Cooperatives among similar players or supplementing players (upstream-, downstream industries, tourism...)



New types of cooperation

Often bottom up driven (or mixture top down-bottom up)

Classification possible by

- Type of activity
 - Scale of activity
 - Function of activity
 - Type of organisational structure
 - Processes of decision finding
 - Degree of integration

(Kuhnen, 2000)

Austrian examples

Traditional:

- E.g. Raiffeisen, wine growers, dairy farmers

New forms driven by matters of:

- Size/scale, markets, risk minimisation, technological development and digitisation, new attitudes of producers and customers, social-, environmental concerns, improvement of quality of life

SIMRA

Social Innovations in Marginalised Rural Regions,
EU-H2020 N°677622, coordinated by James Hutton
Institute, GB

- www.simra-h2020.eu
- www.simra-h2020.eu/index.php/simradatabase/



5 types:

- Crowd funding or voucher based projects
- Food cooperatives
- Land management projects
- Innovation platforms
- Green Care projects



Source: Egartner, S., Niedermayr J., Pfusterschmid, S., Wagner, K. Spectrum of Social Innovation Activities in Austrian Rural Areas. ERDN Conference 2017. Eisenstadt

LIVERUR

Living Lab research concept in Rural Areas,
EU-H2020 N°773757, coordinated by Catholic
University Murcia, ES

- www.liverur.eu



- Machinery Ring Cluster

Source: <https://www.maschinenring.at/cluster>



- School at the Farm

Source: www.schuleambauernhof.at



- Mostlandl – Network, Market, Brand

Source: <http://www.mostlandl-hausruck.at/index.php/news/59-mostlandlnetzwerk-markt-und-marke>



- **PEBUTEC-Farmer's Automat**

Source: <https://www.bauernautomat.at/>



- **Agro Innovation Lab**

Source: <https://www.agroinnovationlab.com/story/>

- **Farm Enterprise "Heidesand"**

source: <http://www.sozialeunternehmen-vorarlberg.at/gutshof-heidesand-wachsen>



■ European Innovation Partnership (EIP)

source: <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/>



- Measure of the EU-Rural Development scheme based on the Europe 2020 strategy, launched 2012
- Fosters competitive and sustainable farming and forestry, strengthens research and innovation.
- The EIP-AGRI brings together innovation actors (farmers, advisers, researchers, businesses, NGOs and others) in operational groups and form an EU-wide network.

Conclusions

- Trend to towards more – horizontal and vertical – integration
- Cross-sector, cross-stakeholder, cross-regional co-operation
- Direct involvement in various activities of enterprises
- Efficiency and innovation in the focus
- More inclusion of environmental and social concerns
- Effort for coordination, administration increasing
- Technological opportunities (digitisation...) increasing

Extremely important: common objectives, mutual understanding, personal trust

Working alone means to **sum up**
the output/success/impact...

but

Cooperating means to **multiply**
the output/success/impact...